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## **Rescaling the transnational city:**

### **In search of a 'trans-methodology'**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper explores a methodology for understanding the ethnically diverse, transnational city through the lens of scale. The paper emerges from an ethnography of the economic and cultural life of Peckham Rye Lane, a multi-ethnic street in south London. We explore the effects of accelerated migrations into cities, and the rescaling of citizenship across individual, street and city spaces. A 'trans-methodology' is pursued not simply as a 'how to' challenge, but as a 'what is at stake' politics, where the restrictions and circuits of migration require evaluation across interrelated the spaces of the city. Scale is interpreted in both geographic and sociological dimensions: as the city-shaping processes, through which the organizations of power and the formations of culture surface or remain invisible, within distinct but connected urban spaces. The paper argues for the analytic stretch across the compendium of micro, meso and macro urban scales, without reifying one above the other.

**Key words:** transnational city, migration, ethnic diversity, scale, methodology

## **Introduction: Scale, mobility and method**

Contemporary processes of global urbanization are sufficiently fast and fluid to affect differentiated but nonetheless pronounced manifestations of macro-economic reorderings and cultural reorientations within and across space. The empirical challenge central to this paper is how to engage with the 'social morphologies' (Vertovec 1999) and temporalities of migration as it takes shape across territories, institutions and subjectivities. The 'transnational city' stretches across everyday lives and structures of state; from small interiors to an entire metropolis; in emergent presents and through established histories of urbanization. 'Global methodologies', or a complex of approaches and methods, are required to engage with planetary scales of change while remaining attentive to particular, local dimensions. Such methodological and theoretical pursuits have forged directions for multi-sited analysis (Marcus 1995), across-border explorations (Smith 2005) and conceptualizations of more hybrid identities alongside asymmetrical conditions of power (Hannerz 1997).

These methodological engagements with the heightened mobilities of a rapidly urbanizing, unequal world are located within a broader ontology of interconnectedness and the interrelationships between global, national and local scapes. What methodological cues might *scale* offer interconnectedness, and how might the global features of mobility, hybridity and asymmetry be differentially understood within and across distinctive yet related *city* spaces? (Glick Schiller 2005). The question of how processes of globalization effect macro, meso and micro arrangements between world economies, states and individuals has been core to theoretical explorations of scale and global transformations in human geography (see Marston, Jones and Woodward for a critique and overview 2005). A focus on scale as a process of reconfiguration in relation to the restructuring of the global economy has been progressed by Brenner

(2000; 2001) as a *rescaling* of power, with the impact of enlarging or diminishing the compositions of state and institutional influence.

‘Rescaling’ processes are defined as socio-spatial, as hierarchically ordered, and as dynamic, where state, city, and household potentially alter in relation to the restructuring of relations between global and national spheres. Marston, Jonas and Woodward’s (2005) critique focuses on the analytic rigidity of scale, where a theoretical coherence or analytic determinism is aligned to size (macros and micros), level (nested hierarchies), and viewpoint (above and below). They argue that the ‘scalar fix’ potentially obscures a view of the differential and the emergent: a view of culture. The question we raise is how to ‘see’ migration and the transnational city and its interrelationships between state structures and everyday lives. Turner (2005) suggests, from the sociological perspective, that the analytic challenge is neither one of ‘structure versus agency’ nor ‘macro versus micro’ but the interplay between societal phenomena and inter-personal processes. Turner’s use of the ‘macro, meso, micro’ is not simply to understand the different orders and properties within respective levels, but ultimately the ‘totalities’ that transcend these levels as, ‘the way that reality unfolds’ (Turner 2005, p. 409). Analysing the properties of urban migration at macro, meso and micro scales of the city potentially opens a way of understanding how the overlaps of national politics and diverse cultures reshape contemporary cities.

We reflect on the dynamic rescaling of the transnational city and the rescaling of citizenship within the city and beyond it, in four ways. First, we explore how scale illuminates not only the effect of nationhood on cities through the politics of boundary making around territories, immigrants and ethnicities. We also pay heed to the diverse cultural reorientations that rescale the city, altering the texture if not always the structure of the city. Here we explore the intersections of power and practice, and the

simultaneous production of national and trans-national allegiances that limit and expand individual connections across national borders. Second, we add the grounding of locality to spatial rescaling, arguing for a scrutiny of the specific conditions of urban context, or what Soja (2010) refers to as the 'whereness' in the production of space. It will matter to our analysis of transnational urbanism, that our street that we start our analysis from is an inner-city street in Peckham, in a comparatively deprived area of inner London, and occupied by an array of ethnicities. Converged on this street are the parallel histories of urbanization and globalization: the nineteenth-century expansion of London to the south making a suburb-city of the once village-like Peckham; the voracious global expansion of the British Empire in the 1700s and 1800s and the entry of the subjects of Empire to England's cities; and emergence of social housing provision through the welfare state from the 1950s, which dramatically reshaped the urban landscape of inner London.

Third, simply describing the locality of the street to the reader in the preceding paragraph highlights the numerous influences and temporalities on one urban street. We therefore deviate from a hierarchical differentiation of scale and veer towards a palimpsest of large-scale economic forces, differentially affected areas of city, and lives that conform to, adapt to or resist change. Finally, we suggest that scale offers a methodological cue to the different ways of knowing the city at different scales, through distinctive modes of collecting and representing data on urban migration. We seek to understand what 'space' and what 'citizenship' is produced at each scale, and at which scales different kinds of citizenships and urbanisms are rendered visible or invisible. 'Trans-methodology' therefore aims to connect scale to method and explores what approaches are required to recognise the different imageries, evidences and interpretations of migration revealed within the intersections of intimate, urban, national and global spheres.

## **Transnational urbanism: a nation/city clash?**

Why would our proposed scalar analysis of the city have particular relevance for understanding transnational urbanism? It is pertinent to begin with a quantitative rendition of ethnic diversity to briefly highlight the political conundrums in addressing the changing dynamics of urban migration and diversification. The 2011 Census reveals a dramatic change in the size, composition and location of 'ethnic minorities' in England and Wales (all data sourced from CoDE 2012). One in five individuals (11 million people) living in England and Wales now identifies themselves as other than 'White British' (to follow the Census terminology) an increase from 13 per cent in 2001 to 20 per cent in 2011. There are substantial increases in ethnic groups, particularly the 'African' ethnic group doubling each decade from 1999, and totalling 990,000 people in 2011, with high increases since the 2001 Census from the 'Chinese' (69 per cent), 'Bangladeshi' (56per cent) and 'Pakistani' (55 per cent) groups. While natural change is cited as the main source of growth for Bangladeshi and Pakistan groups, continued immigration is cited for African and Chinese groups. But identification with distinctive ethnic groups is not without complexity, and there is a substantial increase in people identifying with a 'Mixed' ethnic category, throwing up the classification conundrum that: 'The existing group categories are, perhaps, becoming increasingly less meaningful for many people,' (2012:1), further indicated by the notable increase of the selection of the 'Other' ethnic category in the England and wales Census from 2001 to 2011.

Census shifts in the UK in the last twenty years also highlight that most ethnic minority groups are highly concentrated in urban centres, suggesting that the pattern of contemporary migration into the UK is primarily an urban phenomenon. Of the UK's cities London, with 40 per cent of the UK's migrant population, is the most intense

concentration. More than half of London's current migration arrived after 1990, and a quarter after 2002. Further, 42 per cent of London's migrant population is comprised of ten primary groups. These include: India, Bangladesh, Ireland, Jamaica, Nigeria, Poland, Kenya, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Ghana (GLA 2008a).

What do we learn from the flows and intersections of people and places quantitatively outlined in these various surveys? We learn that the contemporary city has a propensity for diversity, and that ethnic and cultural diversity has different compositions in space and time. However, the political reaction in England to the prolific variation of England's 'national' demography across space is to insist on the idea of nation as a politically and geographically 'flat' concept. Against the heightening urban peaks of diversity rising up over its cities, and expanding global routes extending across economic, social and cultural life, institutionalized border making is increasing insistent by the state. External admissions into the UK are limited by adding to arduous and discriminatory visa requirements, while internal admissions are regulated by the requirement of 'community cohesion' based on 'a clear primary loyalty to this Nation' (Home Office 2001: 20). In the words of Theresa May, Home Secretary (2012):

'With annual migration still at 183,000 we have a way to go to achieve my ambition to reduce that number to the tens of thousands [...] In particular, I want to talk about measures we're taking to make us more discerning when it comes to stopping the wrong people from coming here, and even more welcoming to the people we do want to come here [...] It takes time to establish the personal relationships, the family ties, the social bonds that turn the place where you live into a real community. But the pace of change brought by mass immigration makes those things impossible to achieve. You only have to look at London, where almost half of all primary school children speak English as a second language, to see the challenges we now face in our country.' (Home Office: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/speeches/home-secretary>)

The Home Secretary's perspective is that the pace and scale of migration compromises local belonging. While the accelerated border-crossings integral to global urbanization forge new forms of belonging, they are, therefore, also highly uneven and

highly contested. Transnational migration studies have revealed multi-stranded networks of social and cultural reciprocities sustained by immigrants across their combinations of local and national scapes (see for example Portes, Haller and Eduardo's (2002) work on the multiple loyalties of transnational entrepreneurs sustained by Latin American immigrant groups in the United States; or Smith's (2007) work on transnational political formations across the US-Mexico border). However, at the entangled intersections of these economic, political and lived mobilities exists the fixity of a powerfully evoked nationhood. The rescaling of nations, cities and citizens with respect to global mobility and migration is therefore not without paradox. The border-zones of nations and neighbourhoods remain prejudicially open-and-limited to flows (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) and both racism and dialogue are evident within ethnically diversifying cities (Back 2009). We suggest that it is through the palimpsest of a multi-scalar approach that the paradox of diverse urban belonging can be analysed.

To activate a trans-methodological exploration of urban migration, this paper now turns to a multi-ethnic street in Peckham, south London. By working across city scales we reflect on the distinctive and differentiated nature of contemporary urban flows as they manifest in space. As Guarnizo and Smith (1998) suggest, the research of transnational processes and transnational spaces necessitates a regard for both *levels* and *methods* of analysis. We therefore reflect on the processes of regulation and adaptation that cumulatively constitute Peckham Rye Lane and its relation to neighbourhood, city and globe. In our endeavour to 'ground' transnationalism, locality remains a core concern:

Transnational practices, while locating in more than one national territory, are embodied in specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times. The "locality" thus needs to be further conceptualized (Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 11).



Guarnizo and Smith's focus on locality directly challenges the notions of 'unbounded social actors', 'free floating subjectivities', and a de-territorialisation that has accompanied rethinking of notions of allegiance, identity and community in an increasingly fluid world.

We travel literally and conceptually between Peckham to the multiple national and local links with which Peckham Rye Lane is variously connected. We engage with three particular scales: the emblematic scale (city), the middleground (street) and the idiosyncratic scale (shop). Each scale is grounded in a respective urban locality within which the 'hierarchies of power' and 'modes of incorporation' (Glick Schiller 2005, p.48) reveal different perspectives and properties of urban migration. The *emblematic scale* addresses the notion of the city as a 'whole' and the symbolic forms of representation that are endemic to this scale. The *middle ground* refers to a recognizable urban area (in our case the street) within which a common set of practices emerge. Finally, the *idiosyncratic domain* focuses on the microcosmic and/or momentary scale where a primary challenge is to sufficiently engage with the significance of nuance and particularity.

Emblematic scale	Middle ground	Idiosyncratic scale
1. The organization of power: How is migration accounted and regulated at particular scales?		
2. The processes of integration: How do migrant citizens practice belonging at different levels of locality?		
3. The forms of knowledge: What are the methods and forms of representing migration at different scales? Can these be productively expanded and/or disrupted?		

## The emblematic scale: city

How is 'the' diverse city organized as a political or perceptual whole? The

emblematic scale is a level of organization at which the properties of 'the' city can arguably only be known as an overview: as symbol, image, or allegory. While it is a scale at which the city is politically rendered as spatially and administratively coherent, we explore whether the symbolic representation of 'the' city has a capacity to reveal the shifts and subtleties of urban migration. The core methodological challenge at this scale is how to engage with a large domain or territorial overview while avoiding the risks of analytic reduction. This is in part a question of engaging with different forms of survey and mapping techniques to capture the hybridity identities and flows outside of the reach of the Census.

Soja (2010: 31-32) refers to a 'macrospatial organization' as an 'exogenous geography' or an ideological terrain where 'symbolic framing' asserts a 'top-down' view of power and privilege in physical, institutional and psychological ways. Essential to the analysis of migration at the emblematic scale of city, is how migration is authoritatively denoted in terms of the city as a 'whole'. What are the analytic proxies that are used to represent urban migration? How is the translocality of migrants captured and demarcated? And how do we include the varied aspects of economic, cultural and social exchange connected to transnational flows? In exploring the emblematic scale we focus on three commonly applied quantitative views of urban migration and ethnic diversity in London: the view articulated by the ethnic category (Census); the view shaped by deprivation (Multiple Indices of Deprivation 2006); and the view yielded through the territorial tie of people to place.

Transnational scholars have argued for the need to avoid the categoric constraint of the ethnic group when tracing the complex processes of migration, towards the shared spaces that newcomers and established residents inhabit together (see for example Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Glick Schiller 2009; Hall 2012). Let's briefly

turn to the classification conundrums inherent within the official categorisation of 'ethnicity' and its difficulties with what is increasingly a dynamic 'category'. In 1991 the Census of Population for England and Wales introduced 'The Ethnic Group Category' to add to 'The Country of Birth' category that had been a dominant measure of influx in the UK up until 1991. In order to produce a replicable set of shared characteristics with categorical clarity, a shifting conflation of country of birth, nationality, language, skin colour and geographic region were combined in various ways to register ethnicity. 'White', 'White British', 'Mixed', 'Pakistani', 'Black-Caribbean', 'Other-Black' and 'Other' suggest the difficulties of combining the fluid to fit within the exactitudes required by statistical measures.

A National Statistics publication on collecting and classifying ethnic data within the UK states, 'Globalisation, intermarriage, the changing nature of migration and massive shifts in travel and transportation are challenges to the things that *preserve* and *protect* ethnicity' (2003: preface, my emphasis added). The ethnic category is a coarse form of official organization that serves the needs of authorities to quantify and regulate the populous, as well as to allocate resources to support changing demographic needs. It makes visible the requirements, for example, for translation services within the National Health or literacy programmes within ethnically diverse schools. But it renders invisible the 'the changing nature of migration and massive shifts' that yield more entangled intersections of people within more hybrid places.

Building on the categorization of people to place, it is instructive to overlay a map of London's areas of high ethnic minority concentration established in the Census, with a map of officially designated 'deprivation'. The first mapping of increased ethnic diversity over the census periods of 1991 and 2001 (GLA 2008a) confirms features of the increase in the speed and concentration ethnic diversity to area, of which migration

is one primary contributor. The second mapping of 'The Indices of Multiple Deprivation' across London (GLA 2008b), including indices of household income, employment status, educational attainment, and distance from residence to local amenities, on a ward-by-ward basis within London. Concentrations of social housing estates, for example, tend to register as areas of high deprivation. In overlaying the two maps, there is a strong convergence between officially designated 'deprivation' and ethnically concentrated diversity. Further, it appears that marginal urban locations are most likely to be the destinations of the majority of less-affluent migrants into London. These significant structural conditions provide a locality perspective from which to consider the challenges to and the achievements of living with difference and change.

The positioning effects of London's differentiated localities is exaggerated by its increasing economic and spatial inequality, arguably endemic to its role as a contemporary global city. London registers as the UK's most polarised territory, in which the disparate extremities of wealth and poverty are most concentrated, where effects of unequal distribution are clearly evident in space (Hamnett 2003). Urban disparity, marked in locality, contributes to the migrant's emplacement (Smith 2005), embeddedness (Kloosterman, van der Leun and Rath 1999), or 'fit' between the migrant's status and the receiving urban locale. The analytic risk of marking places and people as deprived is the endurance of these reductive labels, such that the boundaries used to contain and describe 'unequal' places and people reproduces notions of introverted, relegated or 'outcast' urban cultures, all too often disconnected from the structural forces that produce and maintain inequality (Wacquant 2008: 1-12). Further, while deprivation is rendered visible, capacity and skills outside of the analytic categories remain invisible, and the transfer, exchange and innovation emerging within these intensely diverse yet unequal urban settings is officially overlooked.

In 1991, the Peckham ward in which Rye Lane is located was registered as the only ward south of the River Thames to fall amongst London's locales of the highest concentration of ethnic diversity. A further increase in ethnic diversity in Peckham was registered in 2001 and 2011. Peckham is not simply an ethnically diverse place. Peckham is also officially registered as amongst the 10 per cent most deprived areas in the UK. Several large social housing estates feature as the most intense areas of deprivation within Peckham, such that a local development officer referred to Peckham Rye Lane – the street between social housing estates to the north and east and the gentrifying area of largely privately owned houses to the west - as a 'frontline to gentrification' (Interview 2012). If Peckham Rye Lane is a frontline of sorts, so too is it a place of reception in the city into which migrants arrive and share space with established residents. What new spaces emerge from these intersections, and in what ways do they confirm or contest the emblematic representation of the city as zones of deprivation?

A concern for the analysis of migrations in rapidly changing cities is not simply that hybrid practices and complex identity compositions generally fall outside of official surveys and standardised cartographies of urban constituencies. What is omitted is flow itself, and how 'flow' has dynamic spatial and temporal dimensions that contribute to the transformation of the city. Near and far webs of flows include daily transfers between places of work and home (the Census privileges the pinpoint of home), generational succession as economic mobility potentially allows migrant families to acquire more than one local foothold within a city, and transnational interchanges sustained between sending and receiving countries. A real estate agent on Peckham Rye Lane adds historic flows into the web, and articulates how on-going waves of migration and movement are central to the shaping of an economic urban capital such as London:

Interviewer: What do you think will happen to Peckham Rye Lane?

Mark: This is the same thing that's happening all over London. It's similar to Woolwich and Lewisham, where businesses are bought up by Asian people and West Africans. First it was the Irish, then the West Indians took over businesses. And in Lewisham, there were Jewish people, now Indian Sikhs set up shop. [...] Any of the long-time residents of the area, white English people, are moving out. They are ageing, dying or moving away. It's not a racial thing. It's about lifestyle.[...] Immigrants are the same. After they set up their businesses and once they get established, they'll leave and live somewhere else. They'll keep their business in Peckham, but they'll move out to somewhere quieter. (Interview 2012)

The methodological challenge in understanding migration and the city at the emblematic scale is as much a 'how to' as it is a 'what is a stake' concern. New methodological directions are political and pragmatic, and lie in combining the diversity of urban migration patterns, with the topological complexity of lives lived within and between a number of urban locales. As highlighted at this 'emblematic scale', it necessitates moving beyond the bounded categories of that which can be regulated: ethnicity, deprivation and territory. The analysis of the rescaling of 'the' city through migration is compelled to incorporate the ideas of intersections (of people), exchange (of economies and ideas) and inter-locality (spatial webs of allegiance), within the structural context of increasing urban inequality.

## **The middle ground: street**

The middle ground is the scale of organization at which the city is constituted through a set of common practices refined within an area, and appears for example, as 'neighborhood' or 'street'. At the scale of the middle-ground, we focus on a multi-ethnic stretch of street where practice is most explicitly grounded in the day to day, what Conradson and Latham refer to as, 'the panoply of mundane efforts' (2005: 278). Methodological challenges at this scale relate to how locality is understood as a bounded and/or connected space, and the extent to which the urban middleground is

transformed by the macro and micro dynamics of migration. Peckham Rye Lane is analysed here as part of a city center within a planned and maintained administrative area, as well as a dynamic intersection of people, cultures and economies within and beyond the street.

We argue that the organizational property of Peckham Rye Lane is rooted in the street's commonplace logic – a connecting line with a number of urban rooms off its edges – where a mercantile clarity and ubiquity arguably cuts across cultures. Through the exploration of the middle ground we ask how a loose amalgam of ethnically diverse proprietors and traders individually and collectively respond to the economic and cultural logic of Rye Lane's urban locality? While the Indices of Multiple Deprivation represents the area around Rye Lane as a place with high unemployment and comparatively lacking in skills and education, zooming in to the middle ground offers a different perspective from that of abject deprivation. A multilingual streetscape is apparent, revealing a range of adaptive practices that challenge the perspective of a less-than landscape suggested by the deprivation survey.

In 2012 we undertook a face-to-face survey of the independent proprietors along Peckham Rye Lane. Every permanent unit along the 800 metre length of street was recorded, and of a total 199 street-level retail properties, 105 were independent retail, 70 of which were included in a face-to-face survey. We asked each of the proprietors: How long have you traded on this street?; What is your primary trade activity?; Do you live in the surrounding area?; Where were you born?; and How many languages do you speak? Several mappings of Peckham Rye Lane's diversity were undertaken to explore different notations of mapping locality as a sense of a 'local' world connected to multiple places, as well as the multi-lingual concentration that intersects in a place (61 per cent of the independent proprietors claimed to speak four languages or more). We

present here a map of a transnational locality stretched across the local and global scales and linked by a dense network of connections between shops on Rye Lane and the proprietors' respective countries of origin (Figure 1.).

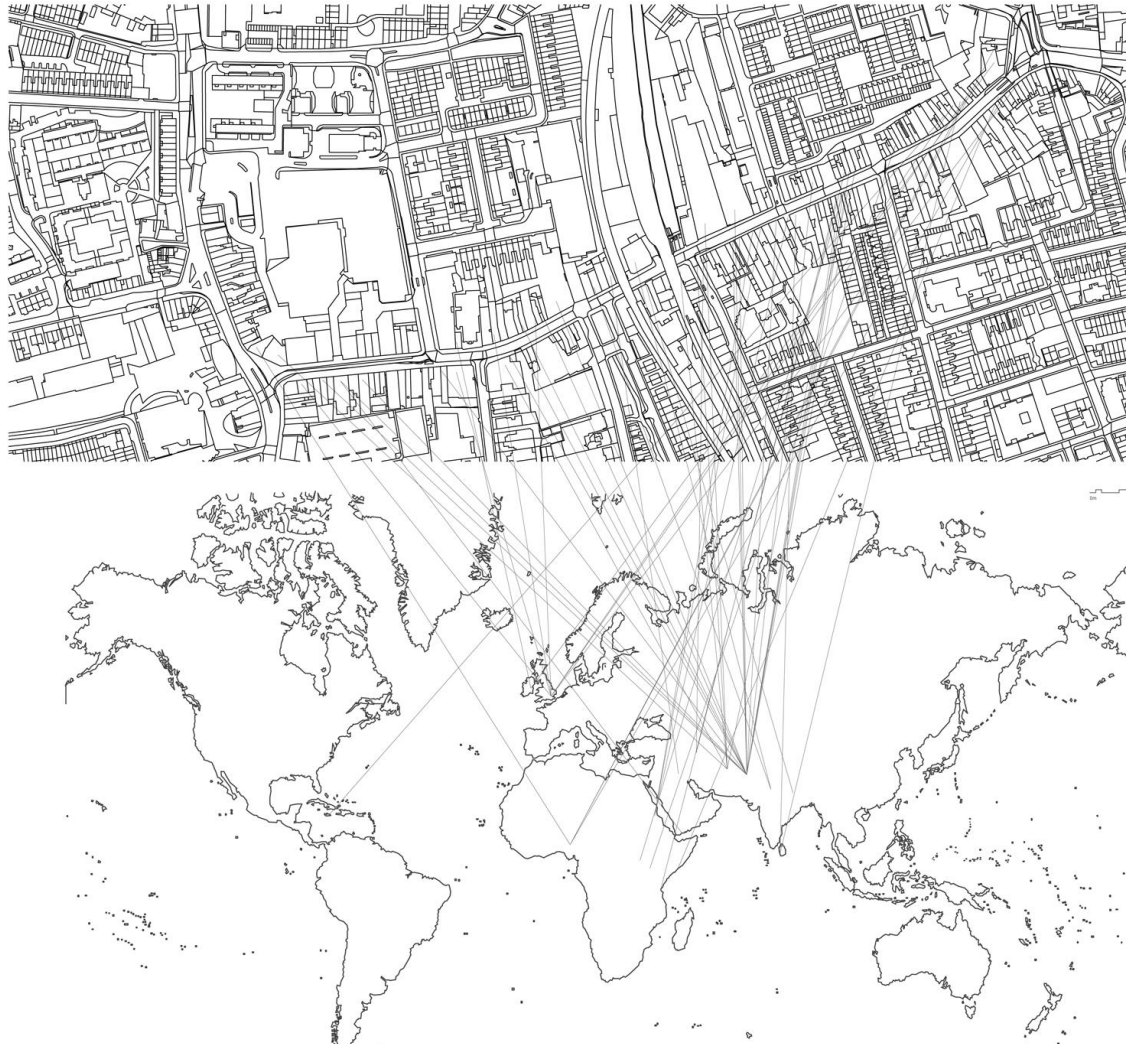


Figure1. Mapping the origins of the independent proprietors on Rye Lane. (LSE Cities, Ordinary Streets Project, 2012).

This 'trans-mapping' offers a sense of a city street re-scaled beyond its local neighbourhood. Active lines of economic and cultural exchange with other places across the world have altered the scale and texture of the street. There is a migratory rhythm to this rescaling, and while 25 per cent of the traders had been on Peckham Rye Lane for more than 20 years, 36 per cent had occupied their shops on the street over the last 5 years. Urban migration is therefore also the accumulation of multiple



temporalities and geographies over extensive periods of time. Transnational migration, rather than understood as a category of origin, ethnicity, or locality, can also be analysed as shared space. The shared space is formed through the multiple exchanges between nations, cities and villages, all of which convergence in altered forms and practices on an urban middle ground.

Significantly, the trans-mapping also reflects the structural logic of place. The production of space in Peckham is closely tied to the urban land values of the area, as well as its public infrastructure including a large number of social housing estates and high levels of public transport service. Moreover, comparatively high residential densities in Peckham (98 persons per hectare as opposed to London's average of 45 persons per hectare) combined with high intensity bus routes and an over-ground rail station that sits midway in the length of the street, generate high thresholds of ethnically diverse, middle to low income footfall on the street. There is therefore an emplacement of the global flows as they intersect with the particular context of Peckham, as is reflected in the particular array of proprietors' countries of origin named in the survey (in order of frequency) - Pakistan, UK, Afghanistan, Nigeria, India, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Kashmir, Kenya, Nepal, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Yemen. (For a comparative mapping of Walworth Road in London, see Hall 2012).

What collections of individual practices emerge on this translocal street? To begin with, 65 per cent of retailers on Peckham Rye Lane operate in independent, non-affiliated retail. Clothing (generally inexpensive) and food (fresh food including meat and fish and ethnically specific foods) predominate, while the presence of beauty products (largely hair and nails), mobile phone products and services (such as contract unlocking), and money remittances are increasing. Ground floor retail space is at a

premium, testified by the limited number of vacancies (less than 10 per cent) despite the global economic crisis and its impact on the demise of high streets across the UK. Public activities such as a host of existing and new mosques and churches find space to the rear of the street or in basements or above-ground rooms where rents are cheaper.

The 'locality fit' between Peckham Rye Lane and a variety of migrant retailers has been historically assisted by its low entry rents and property values sustained across recent decades, as well as its dense, well-connected urban fabric that has yielded high thresholds of support. But its particular vibrancy is not uncontested, and the rapidly gentrifying area to the immediate west of Rye Lane supports a different retail compendium. Parallel to and 250 metres to the west of Rye Lane is, Bellenden Road, a less active retail street that includes an independent bookstore, cafes and gastro pubs. The Telegraph (2006) coarsely sells this as 'the tale of two Peckhams [...] There is north Peckham [...] notorious for its sink estates [...] And then there is Georgian and Victorian Peckham, the conservation area around Bellenden Road. (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/3348928> accessed 14/03/2012). The question here is how urban change – be it through gentrification in Bellenden Road or migration in Rye Lane – registers in public and official discourse. In the words of a local officer:

Interviewer: What is distinctive about Peckham Rye Lane?

Tim: We call it "the inside-out supermarket model". There is a sensory aspect that is distinctive – to some appealing, to others, less so. It is a street with very different business models, one being low entry rents.

There is a split set of demands in Peckham in general terms. A large embedded middleclass argue for a "tidying up" and for Rye Lane to sell more things. But "Rye Lane is a mess" is a general attitude together with a wish that Rye Lane has more to offer. There are complaints about butchers, and yet in its own terms it's thriving. Another pressure is the creative types who want to open bars and galleries.

Planning is one way in which authorities organize and enact power, through envisaging a 'better' future, and facilitating a process of redevelopment. The London Borough of Southwark's regeneration intentions for Peckham Rye Lane, as encapsulated in the document 'Revitalise: Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan' of February 2012' (<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/futurepeckham>), suggests both conserving noteworthy areas of historical distinction, as well as identifying land parcels for redevelopment, including the reintroduction of large format shops in the northern end of Rye Lane. Both the planning strategies of conservation and renewal will require the removal of existing shops. Yet at the time of undertaking our survey of Rye Lane' shops in 2012, it was evident that no detailed survey of the actual retail activities and economic vitality of the street had been undertaken. The emerging forms of retail on Rye Lane, that are arguably pivotal to futures of many high streets across London, remain invisible to the lens of power. It is worth noting, for example, that in London during the period from 2000 to 2006, a 78,5 per cent increase in non-affiliated independent retail was reported (Wrigley, Branson and Clarke 2009), and although the connection has not been explicitly made to migration over the same period, this connection warrants further research.

Further, it became clear in mapping the changing economic and cultural activities on Rye Lane that not only different modes of survey and analysis, but different forms of notation were required. For example, we started drawing a conventional 'land-use' plan for the street, only to discover that the range of activities within the shop interiors defeated the standard land-use and retail categories. The challenge of understanding and communicating urban change does not only reside with the academic researcher: of concern is how the conventional habits of large bureaucratic planning institutions are able to meet the dynamics and complexities of urban change. In the case of Peckham Rye Lane, the street emerges as an urban seam of opportunity for the diverse, largely

immigrant proprietors, and a space requiring a remake on the part of the borough. The planning default mechanisms of 'conservation' and 'big shop' retail in the redevelopment of inner city areas like Peckham may not only hasten a certain gentrification trope, but may also be out of sync with the larger urbanization trends where cities and their middle grounds will continue to diversify.

### **The idiosyncratic scale: shop**

The idiosyncratic scale incorporates a level of individual or face-to-face organization, through which the city emerges as distinctive or nuanced parts. It is an order of scale at which the city is known through a microcosmic, particular and/or momentary part, through which expression, voice or 'personhood' (Bhabha 1994) surfaces. The different ways in which (trans)local micro-worlds are textured, divided and amalgamated reveals the mutations urban migration and diversity as it morphs in daily and annual rhythms. The frame for our exploration of increments of economic and cultural hybridity along Peckham Rye Lane is the long, skinny shop. The dense, linear assemblage of shops whose narrow frontage faces the street, is a cadastral inheritance from the mid-1800s when Peckham Rye Lane was shaped by suburban villas for the middleclass. Each house was accompanied by a generous garden to the front and rear (see for example the Dewhirst map of the parish of Camberwell in 1842), which were subsequently built on to keep pace with the mercantile momentum of industrialization and urbanization in nineteenth century London.

In other multi-ethnic streets across London, the cultural translator within the array of multi-ethnic streetscapes is often the façade (see for example Hall and Datta's work on translocal signscapes 2010). A social agility is performed through this slither of space and while each façade fits within the overall form of the street, each shop

simultaneously presents its own face to the street. A multilingual scape develops quite literally trading on humour, specific cultural needs, opportune cultural mix and convenience. But in the case of Peckham Rye Lane it is the interiority of the shops through which a combination of mercantile and social worlds are organized and communicated. The eccentric arrangements of people, products and services within these long and narrow shops reflect spatial, economic and cultural imperatives that emerge out of the 'whereness' and 'whenness' of Peckham. While the shop interiors along Peckham Rye Lane are owned or rented by one owner or head leasee, a host of subdivisions and interior encrustations belie the simplicity of the primary legal arrangement. Economic, cultural and social subdivisions have created a number of hybrid interiors, or what we refer to as 'mutualisms': a reciprocally beneficial co-existence between different entities.

As previously stated, one in four shops along Peckham Rye Lane has undergone processes of subdivision, and over the course of 2012 we identified several different typologies of mutualism. The first type of hybrid interior is where a single ownership or lease is upheld by one proprietor, but where the shop interior hosts a variety of diverse retail ensembles. The hybridity follows consumer demand, and it is not atypical to find hats, mobile phones, groceries and fresh meat and/or fish all arranged within one long interior. In this first instance, the arrangement is orchestrated by the primary owner/ leaseholder, generally in larger stores where the proprietor has been well established on the street for a long period of time. The second type of mutualism is one where a head proprietor sub-lets smaller spaces within the shop, but the sub-letting occurs within close ethnicity or kinship ties. Such shops on Rye Lane have several retail zones within them, each with a separate till point, and where the boundaries demarking space range from counter level differentiation, to floor-to-ceiling dry walls, particularly in the instances of money remittance services, or hair salons

where a higher degree of privacy is required (Figure 2). The third mutualism within one interior relates to the practice of sub-letting to a variety of tenants across a varied gender and ethnic spectrum, under the curatorial endeavour of the head leasee. Here for example, one can find a money remittance area run by a proprietor originally from Uganda, adjacent to a seamstress from Ghana, adjacent to a mobile phone and fabric outlet run by a proprietor from Pakistan.

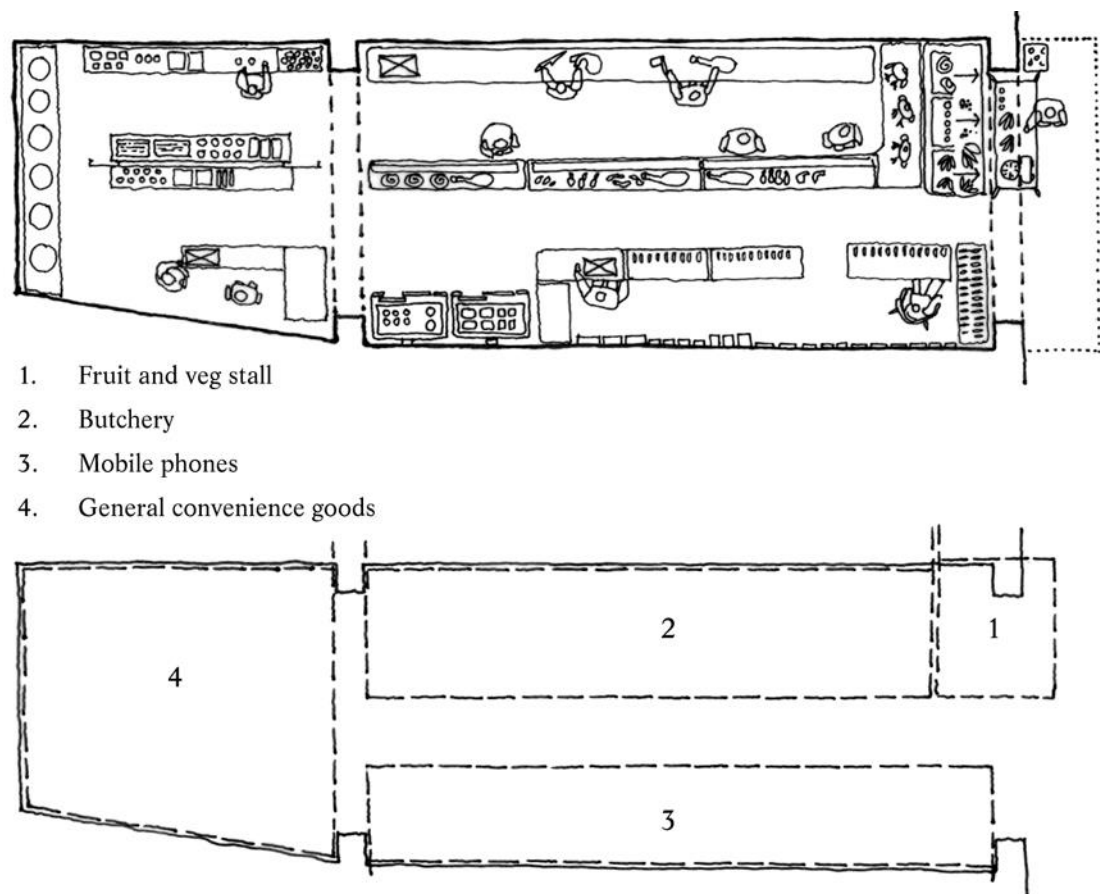


Figure 2. A drawing of a hybrid interior, where the primary retail space has been subdivided and sublet into four 'mutual' retail spaces. (LSE Cities, Ordinary Streets, 2012).

What do these mutualisms afford? In the first instance they allow the proprietor to respond, on a regular and prompt basis, to the nuances of the market such that adjustments to emerging trends can be immediately attended to. At the core of the hybrid model is an economic imperative, one that has had an increasing impetus over the period of the financial crisis. When Ziyad, a young entrepreneur from Afghanistan

who has had a shop on the street for three years, was asked what the most profitable part of his business was he replied: 'Renting out parts of our store to other people'. The benefit effect works in two directions, where Ziyad has a rental income to support his retail business in its early and most vulnerable years, and small entrepreneurs with limited access to start up funds, are able to rent very small spaces on the street. The re-scaling of shop is towards smaller dimensions: one conventional shop footprint subsequently supports several micro initiatives.

Ziyad's rental is approximately £10 000,00 per annum or £12 per metre squared, while he is able to sublet a chair in the hair salon out to Abeje for £80 per week. At another end of the sublet spectrum, money remittance stores and mobile phone shops pay a premium rental for their small spaces. Umesh pays £800 per month for his Western Union store located at the back of the shop, his small shop space of approximately 6 meters squared yielding a rental of £130 per meter squared. Notably, there are several Western Union outlets on Peckham Rye Lane, and a Western Union Consumer trading study of 2008 makes the following claim:

[...] offering a Western Union Service increases the cross-sell opportunity as well as the shopping frequency. 75% of customers making a Western Union Money Transfer transaction also purchased other products and 47% shop more frequently once they know that Western Union is available at the store. (<http://www.westernunion.co.uk> accessed 31 August 2012)

However, the impulse to subdivide, mix and remake these shop interiors is not simply driven by mercantile interests, but also by cultural ones. As Mark, the local real estate agent comments:

I would say the subdivisions are primarily a cultural thing and secondarily an economic thing. It's a way to create a home away from home [...]. It appears chaotic but it works. The big owner has multiple streams of income. (Interview 2012)

Certainly the long, hybrid shop interiors have a bazaar-like quality that exhibits a mix of economic dexterity, opportunism and a litmus-like response to the multi-ethnic, less

affluent urban population that it serves, with affinities for highly sociable modes of trade. The densely invested interiors are illegible from the pavement and much of the emerging life of the street is therefore invisible to the passer-by. Shop arrangements in more affluent areas in London presumably reflect not only different norms of buying and selling, but also a more stringent interpretation and enforcement of title deeds, sub-letting and planning regulations. The planning response on Peckham Rye Lane is to revert to established norms and to prevent the practice of subletting in the future: the Borough have taken the decision to that 'no further subdivisions' will be written into future lease agreement.

## **Towards a trans-methodology**

What does trans-methodology yield for the analysis of ethnically diverse, transnational cities? This paper has explored how the properties of power and practices of adaption evident at different scales of the city, render a complex view of urban migration, ethnic diversity and belonging. While at each scale dimensions of belonging and exchange appear as visible or masked, what remains crucial is to analyse the macro, meso and micro as distinct *and* connected overlays of the city. To apply a methodological complex – a palimpsest of power, practice and place - this paper has proposed three interconnected levels for the analysis of transnational urbanism: the emblematic scale (city), the middle ground (street), and the idiosyncratic scale (shop). We have learnt about important differences in the regulation and practice of migration at different scales of city, street and shop. From this analysis we could say that power is a pulsating force: the state appears close up and far away, in the shop, on the street and throughout the city. We could say too that transnational migrants accumulate varied 'cultural repertoires' and 'multiple habitats' (Vertovec 2001, p.578). But would that say enough about the changing dimensions of the city as it is reshaped through accelerated migration?



What this trans-methodology of Peckham Rye Lane suggests is that the rescaling of the city is never uni-lateral: the city never becomes simply larger or smaller. The transnational city rescales like a concertina: as the city expands to nations and cities beyond its borders, so too does it shrink, its microcosms at once physically smaller, more intensely occupied, and more connected. And as the forms of urban exchange expand through goods, people, language and ideas, so too are they more squeezed, nationally restricted by external and internal border controls. The transnational city constantly emerges as the intense space through which migrant citizens are simultaneously integral to and regulated from the past, present and future of the city.

Finally, a note on scale and method. In seeking to understand the intersections of power, practice and place at the scales of city, street and shop it is apparent that analytic conventions and categories – such as ethnicity, deprivation and territory - are officially authorised and re-inscribed by conventions of method. Citizenship, as shown in this paper, is an active phenomenon – vividly made by regulation, compliance and transgression. Understanding it therefore demands attitudes to intersecting concepts, data and methods. In this paper scale has been a way of understanding the city and how its large and small dimensions are altering through migration. Questions that provide the analytic frame are: How is power organised?; What are the practices of integration? and; What are the methodological conventions and can these be productively disrupted? Trans-methodology traverses across localities, across qualitative and quantitative knowledge, and across verbal and visual communication. Its method, we propose, is to move between the visible and the obscure, the convention and the experiment.

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